



Congressman Mike Simpson

E-Newsletter

Volume 5, 2004

Simpson Promotes New Work for Idaho Lab in House Hearing

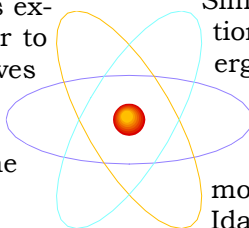
WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Mike Simpson on Wednesday promoted the multi-program capabilities of the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory and Argonne-West in a House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee hearing with the DOE's Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, Jessie Roberson, and the Director of the DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, Dr. Margaret Chu. Roberson oversees most of the cleanup activities at the INEEL, while Chu manages the Yucca Mountain project and will soon take over the National Spent Nuclear Fuel Program located at the INEEL.

Among the many topics addressed in the hearing, Simpson and Chu discussed the ongoing collaboration between the Yucca Mountain Project and the INEEL. Chu told Simpson that in fiscal year 2004 her office would spend \$7.5 million at the INEEL and that in 2005 she intended to spend at least \$17 million at the INEEL. "I am particularly grateful for the way in which Dr. Chu's office has collaborated with the INEEL and drawn on its expertise in spent fuel management and transportation," said Simpson. "Idaho is home to some of the world's experts in these issues and has a lot to offer to the Yucca Mountain project as it moves closer to licensing and operation. The INEEL's expanded participation in this program is good news for the nation, the INEEL, and the American taxpayer."

Simpson also asked Chu and Roberson to take a closer look at the site's infrastructure and the DOE's existing plan to reduce the laboratory footprint. Simpson expressed his concern that the DOE may be planning to demolish buildings that could be useful in the future to the nuclear energy mission, cooperation with the Yucca Mountain project, and other lab-related activities. "I asked Dr. Chu and Assistant Secretary Roberson to take another look at some of the buildings in Idaho that currently sport a big red X indicating they are targeted for demolition," said Simpson. "I think some of those buildings could be very useful for future work at the site and ought to be protected from the wrecking ball. I am hopeful the DOE will alter its thinking a bit on this important subject and keep these infrastructure assets in good shape for the future."

In response to Simpson's question, Chu and Roberson agreed to re-examine the DOE's plans and re-evaluate the future use of some of the site's facilities.

Simpson is a Member of the House Appropriations Committee and its Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. Simpson is working closely with Idaho Senator Larry Craig, who sits on the Senate Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, to promote the multi-program capabilities of the Idaho labs.



Washington, D.C.
1339 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: 202-225-5531
Fax: 202-225-8216

Boise Office
802 West Bannock, Ste 600
Boise, ID 83702
Phone: 208-334-1953
Fax: 208-334-9533

Idaho Falls Office
490 Memorial Drive, Ste 103
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
Phone: 208-523-6701
Fax: 208-523-2384

Twin Falls Office
1201 Falls Ave. E. Ste 25
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Phone: 208-734-7219
Fax: 208-734-7244

Pocatello Office
801 E. Sherman, Ste 194
Pocatello, ID 83201
Phone: 208-478-4160
Fax: 208-478-4162

Weekly Website

If you want to know information about a specific bill in congress, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and type in the bill name or number.

Did you know?

If the U.S. produced more of its own energy, we would not have to choose between filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) — a national security priority, then drain it to lower prices for Americans. We could do both with a National Energy Plan.

Message from Mike

"I want to welcome home all our brave troops in the 938th Engineering Detachment who've been stationed in Iraq. They are now home with their loved ones in Driggs. Thanks to all our soldiers and their families for the sacrifices you make to defend our country." - Congressman Simpson

Quote of the Week

"The chair cannot predict the future."

- Rep. **Mike Simpson**, R-Idaho, responding today to Democratic questions about how long he, as presiding officer, was going to keep open the roll call on a Democratic motion to instruct House conferees to accept Senate language on pay/go rules in negotiations on the FY05 budget resolution.

Printed in Congress Daily PM on March 30, 2004.



A National Energy Plan to Fuel America

(this is the first of a series that will be featured in the E-Newsletter.)

Over-Reliance on OPEC Threatens Security

The organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) now comprises Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. As we lean more heavily on foreign oil—already depending on these nations for 60 percent of our oil supply—we risk losing the independence, strength, and security that has been the hallmark of our nation for decades.

History Repeats Itself

- Remember the OPEC oil embargo of 1973 that shocked the U.S. economy and triggered mile-long lines at the pumps?
- In 1973, America was 30% dependent on foreign oil. Today, we are more than 60% dependent.
- Energy is not only the lifeblood of our economy, it is the lifeblood of our national security. We need energy for our military, for communications, for the technology that powers national intelligence and homeland security.
- Massive dependence on OPEC's whims and other foreign sources of energy is a serious threat to our national security.

Redirection American Dollars

- The U.S. sends more than \$100 billion a year to OPEC nations (and others) for our energy. That money could be spent here, creating jobs, growing the economy, and strengthening homeland security.
- When we outsource our energy needs, we outsource American jobs and our economy suffers. In fact, we are feeling the effects of dependence right now.
- With U.S. oil reserve inventories hovering around a 28-year low and the price of oil at a 30-year high, OPEC has decided to slash production by one million barrels per day on April 1st.
- The strongest, most resourceful nation in the world should not be at the mercy of OPEC whims.

High Environmental Standards

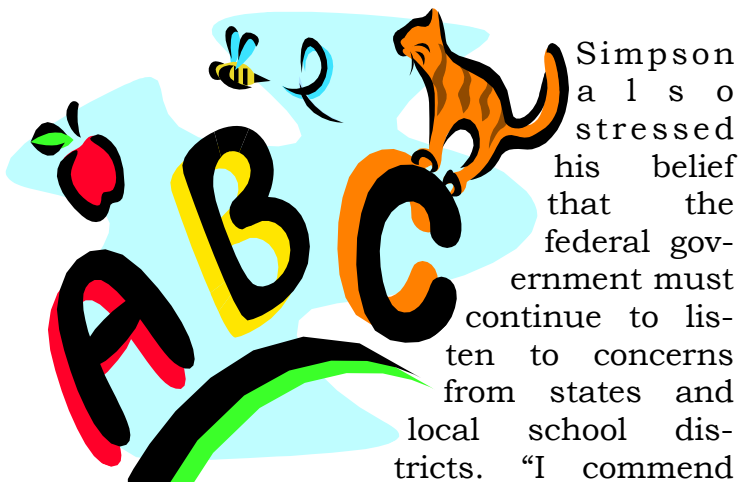
- As an environmental leader, the U.S. should produce more of our energy in America, not import it from countries with outdated technology and zero pollution laws.

Congressman Mike Simpson

Questions Department of Education on No Child Left Behind

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Mike Simpson, a Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee that has jurisdiction over Department of Education, reaffirmed his support for adapting No Child Left Behind regulations to assist rural schools in implementing the law during a hearing with Acting Deputy Secretary of Education, Gene Hickok.

The Department of Education recently announced three new policies that give teachers greater flexibility in demonstrating that they are highly qualified under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Under the new policies, teachers in rural areas that are highly qualified in at least one subject will have three more years to become highly qualified in any additional subjects they teach. These new policies, which take effect immediately, will address the particular challenges of teachers who teach more than one subject, especially those in rural districts.



Simpson also stressed his belief that the federal government must continue to listen to concerns from states and local school districts. "I commend the Department for its willingness to listen to local education stakeholders and for adjusting regulations concerning highly qualified teachers as well as special education and limited English proficient students," said Simpson. "I've been a strong proponent of providing more flexibility for rural schools and I am pleased the Department has responded to those concerns. These new regulations demonstrate the Department's willingness to ensure that No Child Left Behind provides a measure of flexibility for school districts, especially those in more rural areas."

Simpson also thanked Deputy Secretary Hickok for visiting Idaho and speaking with teachers, administrators and parents about the impacts of No Child Left Behind on Idaho. "I think it is absolutely vital for the Department to go to schools and work directly with teachers and administrators who will be implementing No Child Left Behind and its provisions. I am pleased Deputy Secretary Hickok took time to do just that in Idaho and I encourage the Department to continue its outreach to Idaho educators, administrators, and parents," said Simpson.

Hickok visited Boise and toured Taft Elementary School. The Department of Education named Taft Elementary School a blue ribbon school, an honor given to only 214 public and private schools nationwide, recognizing great improvements in performance.

9/11: For the Record

By Dr. Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor

The al Qaeda terrorist network posed a threat to the United States for almost a decade before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Throughout that period -- during the eight years of the Clinton administration and the first eight months of the Bush administration prior to Sept. 11 -- the U.S. government worked hard to counter the al Qaeda threat.

During the transition, President-elect Bush's national security team was briefed on the Clinton administration's efforts to deal with al Qaeda. The seriousness of the threat was well understood by the president and his national security principals. In response to my request for a presidential initiative, the counterterrorism team, which we had held over from the Clinton administration, suggested several ideas, some of which had been around since 1998 but had not been adopted. No al Qaeda plan was turned over to the new administration.

We adopted several of these ideas. We committed more funding to counterterrorism and intelligence efforts. We increased efforts to go after al Qaeda's finances. We increased American support for anti-terror activities in Uzbekistan.

We pushed hard to arm the Predator unmanned aerial vehicle so we could target terrorists with greater precision. But the Predator was designed to conduct surveillance, not carry weapons. Arming it presented many technical challenges and required extensive testing. Military and intelligence officials agreed that the armed Predator was simply not ready for deployment before the fall of 2001. In any case, the Predator was not a silver bullet that could have destroyed al Qaeda or stopped Sept. 11.

We also considered a modest spring 2001 increase in funding for the Northern Alliance. At that time, the Northern Alliance was clearly not going to sweep across Afghanistan and dispose of al Qaeda. It had been battered by defeat and held less than 10 percent of the country. Only the addition of American air power, with U.S. special forces and intelligence officers on the ground, allowed the Northern Alliance its historic military advances in late 2001. We folded this idea into our broader strategy of arming tribes throughout Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban.

Let us be clear. Even their most ardent advocates did not contend that these ideas, even taken together, would have destroyed al Qaeda. We judged that the collection of ideas presented to us were insufficient for the strategy President Bush sought. The president wanted more than a laundry list of ideas simply to contain al Qaeda or "roll back" the threat. Once in office, we quickly began crafting a comprehensive new strategy to "eliminate" the al Qaeda network. The president wanted more than occasional, retaliatory cruise missile strikes. He told me he was "tired of swatting flies."

Through the spring and summer of 2001, the national security team developed a strategy to eliminate al Qaeda -- which was expected to take years. Our strategy marshaled all elements of national power to take down the network, not just respond to individual attacks with law enforcement measures. Our plan called for military options to attack al Qaeda and Taliban leadership, ground forces and other targets -- taking the fight to the enemy where he lived. It focused on the crucial link between al Qaeda and the Taliban. We would attempt to compel the Taliban to stop giving al Qaeda sanctuary -- and if it refused, we would have sufficient military options to remove the Taliban regime. The strategy focused on the key role of Pakistan in this effort and

the need to get Pakistan to drop its support of the Taliban. This became the first major foreign-policy strategy document of the Bush administration -- not Iraq, not the ABM Treaty, but eliminating al Qaeda.

Before Sept. 11, we closely monitored threats to our nation. President Bush revived the practice of meeting with the director of the CIA every day -- meetings that I attended. And I personally met with George Tenet regularly and frequently reviewed aspects of the counterterror effort.

Through the summer increasing intelligence "chatter" focused almost exclusively on potential attacks overseas. Nonetheless, we asked for any indication of domestic threats and directed our counterterrorism team to coordinate with domestic agencies to adopt protective measures. The FBI and the Federal Aviation Administration alerted airlines, airports and local authorities, warning of potential attacks on Americans.

Despite what some have suggested, we received no intelligence that terrorists were preparing to attack the homeland using airplanes as missiles, though some analysts speculated that terrorists might hijack airplanes to try to free U.S.-held terrorists. The FAA even issued a warning to airlines and aviation security personnel that "the potential for a terrorist operation, such as an airline hijacking to free terrorists incarcerated in the United States, remains a concern."

We now know that the real threat had been in the United States since at least 1999. The plot to attack New York and Washington had been hatching for nearly two years. According to the FBI, by June 2001 16 of the 19 hijackers were already here. Even if we had known exactly where Osama bin Laden was, and the armed Predator had been available to strike him, the Sept. 11 hijackers almost certainly would have carried out their plan. So, too, if the Northern Alliance had somehow managed to topple the Taliban, the Sept. 11 hijackers were here in America -- not in Afghanistan.

President Bush has acted swiftly to unify and streamline our efforts to secure the American homeland. He has transformed the FBI into an agency dedicated to catching terrorists and preventing future attacks. The president and Congress, through the USA Patriot Act, have broken down the legal and bureaucratic walls that prior to Sept. 11 hampered intelligence and law enforcement agencies from collecting and sharing vital threat information. Those who now argue for rolling back the Patriot Act's changes invite us to forget the important lesson we learned on Sept. 11.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the president, like all Americans, wanted to know who was responsible. It would have been irresponsible not to ask a question about all possible links, including to Iraq -- a nation that had supported terrorism and had tried to kill a former president. Once advised that there was no evidence that Iraq was responsible for Sept. 11, the president told his National Security Council on Sept. 17 that Iraq was not on the agenda and that the initial U.S. response to Sept. 11 would be to target al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Because of President Bush's vision and leadership, our nation is safer. We have won battles in the war on terror, but the war is far from over. However long it takes, this great nation will prevail.

